
China SignPost™ “Greatest Hits” #3: Agricultural & Consumer Markets

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Legacies of restrictive farmland ownership policies, in addition to land and water resources overtaxed by pollution and urban development, constrain China’s agricultural production potential significantly. Famine and grain supply problems helped topple at least five of China’s 17 dynasties, and the strong correlation between food supply disruptions and regime change keeps the Chinese Communist Party tightly focused on ensuring sufficient grain supplies.

Gabe Collins and Andrew Erickson, “[Keeping the Mandate of Heaven: Why China’s Leaders Focus Heavily on Grain Prices and Security](#),” *China SignPost™* (洞察中国) 22 (17 February 2011).

Despite the supply-side challenges, demand continues to grow. Chinese consumers are becoming wealthier and eating more meat. The changing Chinese diet is characterized by rising fast food intake, an important consumer barometer because even those who cannot afford a passenger car or fancy apartment can afford to visit name-brand chains several times per week. As a result, protein-hungry Chinese consumers are helping to underwrite a long-term global farm commodity boom that is set to yield especially large benefits for the U.S., Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Ukraine, and—to some extent—Russia.

Gabe Collins and Andrew Erickson, “[Supersize Me: Rising Fast Food Sales Suggest China Will Keep Driving a Global Farm Commodity Boom](#),” *China SignPost™* (洞察中国) 54 (9 February 2012).

Gabe Collins and Andrew Erickson, “[China’s Growing Meat Consumption is Driving Corn Imports and Creating a New Strategic Dependency](#),” *China SignPost™* (洞察中国) 51 (2 January 2012).

Our research also embraces the complexity of China’s consumer markets. China is not simply a tale of perpetual growth and bullishness. Rather, there are pockets of periodic turbulence wherein it can be much harder to manage risk and locate opportunities for investment, as well as to know what areas to avoid. *China SignPost™* helps steer readers through these stormy seas and around hazardous shoals with creative analysis of data to give insights that few other research providers can offer.

Gabe Collins and Andrew Erickson, "[Downturn to "New Normal"? China's Consumer Economy is Rolling Over and Sales of Chicken, Cars, and Shoes Are Taking a Hit](#)," *China SignPost™* (洞察中国) 60 (1 August 2012).

Gabe Collins and Andrew Erickson, "[Can Inland Consumption Soften Coastal Industrial Slump? China's Weak Earthmover Sales and Poor Coal Demand Point to More Economic Turbulence, But Second and Third Tier Property Markets Show Flashes of Life](#)," *China SignPost™* (洞察中国), 61 (14 August 2012).

As 2014 dawns, followers of *China SignPost™* can rest assured that we'll continue to keep a close eye on key trends and underlying drivers to offer a versatile, reliable compass for understanding Chinese agricultural and consumer developments.

About Us**China Signpost™ 洞察中国—“Clear, high-impact China analysis.”©**

China SignPost™ aims to provide high-quality China analysis and policy recommendations in a concise, accessible form for people whose lives are being affected profoundly by China’s political, economic, and security development. We believe that by presenting practical, apolitical China insights we can help citizens around the world form holistic views that are based on facts, rather than political rhetoric driven by vested interests. We aim to foster better understanding of key internal developments in China, its use of natural resources, its trade policies, and its military and security issues.

China SignPost™ 洞察中国 founders Dr. Andrew Erickson and Mr. Gabe Collins have more than a decade of combined government, academic, and private sector experience in Mandarin Chinese language-based research and analysis of China. Dr. Erickson is an Associate Professor at the U.S. Naval War College’s China Maritime Studies Institute (CMSI) and an Associate in Research at Harvard’s John King Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies. Mr. Collins is a J.D. candidate at the University of Michigan Law School. His research focuses on commodity, security, and rule of law issues in China, Russia, and Latin America.

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